



# Jainism

## Introduction

Jainism is an ancient religion that is rooted in the philosophy that teaches the way to liberation and a path to spiritual purity and enlightenment through disciplined nonviolence to all living creatures.

## When did Jainism Originate?

- Jainism came to prominence in the **6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.**, when **Lord Mahavira** propagated the religion.
- There were **24 great teachers**, the last of whom was **Lord Mahavira**.
  - These twenty-four teachers were called **Tirthankaras**-people who had attained all knowledge (Moksha) while living and preached it to the people.
  - The first Tirthankara was **Rishabhatha**.
- The word 'Jain' is derived from **jina** or **jaina** which means the '**Conqueror**'.

## Vardhamana Mahavira

- Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara, was born in 540 B.C. in a village called **Kundagrama** near **Vaishali**.
- He belonged to **Jnatrika clan** and was connected to the royal family of Magadha.
- His father Siddharta was the head of the Jnathrika Kshatriya clan and his mother Trishala was a sister of Chetaka, the king of Vaishali.
- At the age of **30 years**, he renounced his home and become an ascetic.
- He practised austerity for **12 years** and attained highest spiritual knowledge called **Kaivalya**(i.e conquered misery and happiness) at the age of 42 years.
- He delivered his first sermon at **Pava**.
- A symbol was associated with every Tirthankara and Mahavira's symbol was a **lion**.
- His missions took him **Koshala, Magadha, Mithila, Champa** etc
- He passed away at the age of 72 in 468 B.C. at the **Pavapuri** in Bihar.

## Cause of Origin?

- Hinduism had become rigid and orthodox with complex rituals and dominance of Brahmins.
- The Varna system divided the society into 4 classes based on birth, where the two higher classes enjoyed several privileges.
- Kshatriya's reaction against the domination of the brahmanas.
- Spread of the new agricultural economy in the north-eastern India due to the use of iron tools.

## What are the Tenets of Jainism?

- It mainly aims at the **attainment of liberation**, for which no ritual is required. It can be attained through three principles called **Three Jewels or Triratna i.e.**

- **Right Faith** (Samyaktarshana)
- **Right Knowledge** (Samyaktjnana)
- **Right Action** (Samyakcharita)
- **Five Doctrines of Jainism**
  - **Ahimsa**: Non-injury to living being
  - **Satya**: Do not speak a lie
  - **Asteya**: Do not steal
  - **Aparigraha**: Do not acquire property
  - **Brahmacharya**: Observe continence

## The Concept of God in Jainism

- Jainism believes that the universe and all its substances or entities are eternal. It has no beginning or end with respect to time. Universe runs on its own accord by its own cosmic laws.
- All the substances change or modify their forms continuously. Nothing can be destroyed or created in the universe.
  - There is no need for someone to create or manage the affairs of the universe.
  - Hence Jainism does not believe in God as a creator, survivor, and destroyer of the universe.
- However Jainism does believe in God, not as a creator, but as a perfect being.
  - When a person destroys all his karmas, he becomes a liberated soul. He lives in a perfect blissful state in Moksha forever.
  - The liberated soul possesses infinite knowledge, infinite vision, infinite power, and infinite bliss. This living being is a God of Jain religion.
  - Every living being has a potential to become God.
- Hence Jains do not have one God, but Jain Gods are innumerable and their number is continuously increasing as more living beings attain liberation.

## Anekantavada

- **Anekantavada in Jainism** is the ontological assumption that any entity is at once enduring but also undergoing change that is both constant and inevitable.
- The doctrine of anekantavada states that all entities have three aspects: substance (dravya), quality (guna), and mode (paryaya).
  - Dravya serves as a substratum for multiple gunas, each of which is itself constantly undergoing transformation or modification.
  - Thus, any entity has both an abiding continuous nature and qualities that are in a state of constant flux.

## Syadvada

- **Syadvada**, in Jaina metaphysics, the doctrine that all judgments are conditional, holding good only in certain conditions, circumstances, or senses, expressed by the word syat (“may be”).
- The ways of looking at a thing (called naya) are infinite in number.
- Syadvada literally means the ‘method of examining different probabilities’.

## Difference between Anekantavada and Syadvada

- The basic difference between them is that Anekantavada is the knowledge of all differing but opposite attributes whereas Syadvada is a process of the relative description of a particular attribute of an object or an event.

## What are the Sects/ School of Jainism?

- Jain order has been divided into two major sects: Digambara and Svetambara.
  - The division occurred mainly due to famine in Magadha which compelled a group led by Bhadrabahu to move South India .

- During the 12 years famine, the group in South India stick to the strict practices while the group in Magadha adopted a more lax attitude and started wearing white clothes.
- After the end of famine, when the Southern group came back to Magadha, the changed practices led to the division of Jainism into two sects.
- **Digambara:**
  - Monks of this sect believe in complete nudity. Male monks do not wear clothes while female monks wear unstitched plain white sarees.
  - Follow all five vows (Satya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Aparigraha and Brahmacharya).
  - Believe women cannot achieve liberation.
  - **Bhadrabahu** was an exponent of this sect.
  - **Major Sub-Sects**
    - Mula Sangh
    - Bisapantha
    - Terapantha
    - Taranpantha or Samaiyapantha
  - **Minor Sub-Sets**
    - Gumanapantha
    - Totapantha
- **Svetambara:**
  - Monks wear white clothes.
  - Follow only 4 vows (except brahmacharya).
  - Believe women can achieve liberation.
  - **Sthulabhadra** was an exponent of this sect.
  - **Major Sub-Sects**
    - Murtipujaka
    - Sthanakvasi
    - Terapanthi

## Reason for the Spread of Jainism?

- Mahavira organised an order of his followers which admitted both men and women.
- Jainism didn't very clearly mark itself out from the brahmanical religion, therefore it spread gradually into West and South India where brahmanical order was weak.
- The great Mauryan King Chandragupta Maurya, during his last years, became a Jain ascetic and promoted Jainism in Karnataka.
- Famine in Magadha led to the spread of Jainism in South India.
  - The famine lasted for 12 years, and in order to protect themselves many Jains went to South India under the leadership of Bhadrabahu.
- In Odisha, it enjoyed the patronage of Kalinga King of Kharavela.

## What is Jain Literature?

- Jain literature is classified into two major categories:
  - **Agam Literature:** Lord Mahavir's preaching was methodically compiled by his followers into many texts. These texts are collectively known as Agams, the sacred books of the Jain religion. Agam literature is also divided into two groups:
    - **Ang-agama:** These texts contain the direct preaching of Lord Mahavir. They were compiled by Ganadharas.
      - Lord Mahavir's immediate disciples were known as Ganadhara.
      - All Ganadharas possessed perfect knowledge (keval-gyan).
      - They orally compiled the direct preaching of Lord Mahavir into twelve main texts (sutras). These texts are known as Ang-agams.
    - **Ang-bahya-agams (outside of Ang-agams):** These texts are expansions of Ang-agams. They were compiled by Shrutakevalin.
      - Monks who had knowledge of a minimum of ten Purvas were known as Shrutakevalin.
      - Shrutakevalin wrote many texts (sutras) expanding the subject matter defined in the Ang-agams. Collectively these texts are called Ang-bahya-agams meaning outside of Ang-agams.

- The twelfth Ang-agam is called Drastivad. The Drastivad consists of fourteen Purva texts, also known as Purvas or Purva-agams. Among Ang-agams, Purvas were the oldest sacred texts.
  - They are written in the Prakrit language.
- **Non-agam Literature:** This consists of commentary and explanation of Agam literature and independent works, compiled by elder monks, nuns, and scholars.
  - They are written in many languages such as Prakrit, Sanskrit, Old Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannad, Tamil, German, and English.

## What is Jain Architecture?

- Jain architecture cannot be accredited with a style of its own, it was almost an offshoot of Hindu and Buddhist styles.
- Types of Jain Architecture:
  - **Layana/Gumphas (Caves)**
    - Ellora Caves (Cave No. 30-35)- Maharashtra
    - Mangi Tungi Cave- Maharashtra
    - Gajapantha Cave- Maharashtra
    - Udayagiri-Khandagiri Caves- Odisha
    - Hathi-gumpha Cave- Odisha
    - Sittanavasal Cave- Tamil Nadu
  - **Statues**
    - Gomateshwara/Bahubali Statue- Shravanabelagola, Karnataka
    - Statue of Ahimsa(Rishabhnaatha)- Mangi-Tungi hills, Maharashtra
  - **Jinalaya (Temple)**
    - Dilwara Temple- Mount Abu, Rajasthan
    - Girnar and Palitana Temple- Gujarat
    - Muktagiri Temple- Maharashtra

## Note

- **Manastambha:** It is found in the front side of the temple, having religious importance with an ornamental pillar structure carrying the image of Tirthankar on top and on all four cardinal directions.
- **Basadis:** Jain monastic establishment or temples in Karnataka.

## Jain Council

- **First Jain Council**
  - Held at **Patliputra** in **3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C.** and was presided by **Sthulbhadra**.
- **Second Jain Council**
  - Held at **Vallabhi** in **512 A.D.** and was presided by **Devardhi Kshmasramana**.
  - Final Compilations of 12 Angas and 12 Upangas.

## How is Jainism different from Buddhism?

- Jainism **recognised** the **existence of god** while Buddhism did not.
- Jainism does **not condemn the varna** system while Buddhism does.
- Jainism believed in **transmigration of soul i.e. reincarnation** while Buddhism does not.
- Buddha prescribed the **middle path** while Jainism advocates his followers to even completely discard the clothes i.e. life of austerity.

## What is the Relevance of Jain Ideology in Today's World?

- **Contribution of Jainism:**
  - Attempts to reform the evils of varna order.

- Growth of Prakrit and Kannada.
- Contributed to architecture and literature immensely.
- The Jain theory of **Anekantavada** translated into practical terms in social context would mean three principles:
  - Absence of dogmatism or fanaticism
  - Honouring the freedom of others
  - Peaceful coexistence and cooperation
- **It brings the spirit of intellectual and social tolerance.**
- The **principle of Ahimsa(non-violence)** gains prominence in today's nuclear world to attain long lasting peace in the society.
  - The concept of **Ahimsa** can also help to counter growing violence and terrorism.
- The principle of **Aparigraha** (non-possession) can help to control consumerist habits as there is great increase in greed and possessive tendencies.
  - Global warming also can be healed with this thought by doing away with unwanted luxuries, which produce carbon emissions.

### Multiple Choice Questions

**Q.** With reference to the religious practices in India, the “Sthanakvasi” sect belongs to (2018)

A. Buddhism

**B. Jainism**

C. Vaishnavism

D. Shaivism

**Q.** Which of the following statements is/are applicable to Jain doctrine?

- A. The surest way of annihilating Karma is to practice penance.
- B. Every object, even the smallest particle, has a soul.
- C. Karma is the bane of the soul and must be ended.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

**D. 1, 2 and 3**

**Q.** With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism?

- 1. Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
- 2. Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
- 3. Denial of efficacy of rituals

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only

**B. 2 and 3 only**

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

**Q.** Anekantavada is a core theory and philosophy of which one of the following?

A. Buddhism

**B. Jainism**

C. Sikhism

D. Vaishnavism

**Mains Question**

**Q.** Discuss the reasons for the rise of Jainism and Buddhism in India and their impact. (150 words)

**Q.** Explain how the basic philosophy of Jainism can help to tackle various social and environmental problems. (150 words)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/jainism-3>